

Top Secret 219

(Security Classification)

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Tuesday 4 April 1978

CG NIDC 78/078C

NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION
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State Dept. review completed

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Approved For Release 2007/03/14 : CIA-RDP79T00975A030600010060-5

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Tuesday, 4 April 1978

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The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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FRANCE: Presidential Election

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[] Liberal Gaullist Jacques Chaban-Delmas, backed by President Giscard's supporters, won election as president of the new French National Assembly yesterday over Edgar Faure, the official Gaullist candidate. Chaban's victory, a setback for Gaullist chief Chirac, will add further to the power Giscard gained from the center-right's election victory last month and will help the President's efforts to split the Gaullists and weaken Chirac.

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[] Chaban, the Gaullist presidential candidate in 1974 as well as a former Prime Minister and Assembly president, has long advocated the "opening to the left" that Giscard wants to implement. The support Chaban received from moderate Gaullists in the Assembly--and at the party's own nominating meeting last week when one-third of the delegates refused to back Faure--reinforces other indications that Chirac's control of the Gaullists is far from absolute.

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[] According to press reports, some Gaullists are irritated at what they see as Chirac's efforts to remake the party into a vehicle for his personal ambitions. Others probably see Giscard and "centrism" as the wave of the future and do not want to be isolated if Chirac persists in seeking to distance himself and the Gaullists from the Giscardian forces.

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[] The Assembly presidency is a post of considerable influence. It will enable Chaban not only to try to act as an alternate focus to Chirac within his party but also to exercise considerable power over domestic policy through manipulation of the Assembly's handling of the government's legislation. []

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NATO: Armaments Cooperation

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[] //The Independent European Program Group within NATO began meetings yesterday in Rome to discuss armaments cooperation within the Alliance. The aim of the discussions is to help make US and Canadian armaments cooperation with Western Europe a "two-way street." Historically, the balance in trans-Atlantic arms sales has strongly favored US exports.//

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[] //The Program Group was created to promote a more effective West European contribution to the military equipment needs of the Alliance. This session is important in determining how the issue will be handled when NATO's National Armaments Directors meet beginning 25 April.//

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[] //At a high-level NATO meeting on armaments cooperation on 20 March, representatives exchanged views on equipment planning, obstacles to the trans-Atlantic flow of defense equipment, and the purchase of supplies in Western Europe by US and Canadian forces stationed there. The French, with considerable help from the Belgian, Dutch, and Italian representatives, sought to limit the discussion to obstacles that impede West European penetration of the US arms market.//

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[] //With the help of his Canadian colleague, the US representative was able to gain the European delegates' agreement to consider a broader focus at the current session of the Program Group, including obstacles to US penetration of West European arms markets as well as the possible creation of groups on industrial cooperation and more standardized trans-Atlantic procedures in the research, development, and production of arms.//

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[] //Preliminary soundings have indicated general pessimism that the Program Group will agree to such groups at this time. The prevailing view in Western Europe appears to be that the Program Group needs more time before it can "speak with one voice" on these matters.//

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[] //There is also domestic disagreement in some of NATO's European members over participation in the Program Group. In Italy, for example, the Ministry of Defense clearly favors participation in the Program Group, while other interested parties, including the Ministry of Industry and defense industry spokesmen, are skeptical that participation will bring any benefits to Italy. One official complained of the marked imbalance favoring British, French, and West German firms in the Program Group's initial list of West European arms products to be considered in the trans-Atlantic dialogue. []

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CHAD-LIBYA: Chadian Concessions

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[] *The terms of the agreement reached last week between Chad and the Libyan-backed rebels, who control much of the*

northern part of the country, indicate that the central government made substantial concessions. The five-day delay in publicizing the agreement suggests that deep divisions remain within Chad's ruling military council over the terms.

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[] The government's most important concessions are "recognition" of the rebels and acknowledgment that its own status is "provisional." The agreement also calls for the establishment of a military committee to investigate the presence of foreign troops or bases in Chad. These terms were originally presented by the rebels as preconditions to negotiations and were supported by the Libyans. They are presumably aimed at the French, who have approximately 700 troops in Chad. The government, for its part, will probably attempt to interpret the "presence of foreign troops" to mean Libyan support of the Chadian insurgents.

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[] A high-ranking official in the Egyptian Foreign Ministry has told US Embassy officers that the agreement is a Chadian "capitulation." Egypt, which shares Chad's concern about Libya and had been providing the Chadians with small amounts of military assistance, is pessimistic about the future of President Malloum's government and Chad's territorial integrity. The Egyptians believe Libya's "victory" in the negotiations will lead to the ouster of the French from Chad. []

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GHANA: Protest Threatened

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[] Professional groups in Ghana are threatening a general strike to protest the victory General Acheampong is claiming in last week's referendum on his proposal for a nonparty "union" government. They are calling for his immediate resignation. Acheampong has banned opposition groups that campaigned against his proposal, and his government is warning that dissent will be dealt with severely.

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[] Ghana's association of professional bodies--representing doctors, lawyers, engineers, and others--has adopted a resolution condemning the referendum as a fraud. The resolution calls on Acheampong to relinquish power to a caretaker council of state headed by the country's respected chief justice that would return Ghana to civilian rule by the end of the year.

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[] To enforce their demands, the professionals say they will immediately mount a general strike. Such a move could cause shortages of electricity, water, petroleum products, and medical services. Professionals launched a strike last summer that nearly paralyzed Ghana and almost toppled the government.

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[] Acheampong banned opposition groups apparently because the largest of these groups, the People's Movement for Freedom and Justice, circulated a version of the referendum results that asserted "union" government was defeated by a 53-percent vote. The group says these results were approved by the head of the electoral commission. This official, who was in hiding until late yesterday, has been replaced by an Acheampong loyalist who is expected to certify the referendum results in favor of "union" government. []

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MIDDLE EAST - AFRICA: Locust Threat

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[] *Desert locusts could be a serious problem this year in a broad area extending from East Africa across the southern Arabian Peninsula to southern Iran and Pakistan. If present favorable breeding conditions persist and locust buildup is unchecked, crops in East Africa and South Asia could be devastated during the next six months.*

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[] Serious locust infestations are developing in Ethiopia and Somalia, where inspection and spraying have been hampered by the recent fighting. Infestations were spotted and sprayed during February near Jizan on the Red Sea coast of Saudi Arabia. If unchecked, swarms will begin to migrate from these areas southward during August and September into major crop areas in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. In addition, unusually heavy rainfall in the southeastern Arabian Peninsula and in southern Iran and Pakistan this year has created favorable breeding grounds in these areas.

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[] The increased food supply resulting from the heavy rains could trigger a change in the locusts' breeding habits from a phase in which they remain less numerous and relatively harmless to one in which they multiply very rapidly and form swarms. Crowding among locusts accelerates their reproductive cycle to four or five times its normal rate.

25X1 [] A swarm of locusts can devour the produce of fields and gardens to the roots within a matter of hours. The locusts fly at a speed of 16 to 19 kilometers per hour and can remain airborne for up to 17 hours, or longer in favorable air currents. A swarm can migrate several hundred kilometers in a 24-hour period. Natural forces--temperature extremes and dryness--will eventually kill or scatter a locust swarm, with the survivors reverting to their less active phase.

25X1 [] The locust population buildup frequently takes place in countries that have little cropland to lose to migrating locusts. Such countries have little incentive to undertake expensive spraying in the breeding grounds, where the locusts are most easily controlled. This situation is complicated further in East Africa, where hostilities have been hampering locust control efforts and where international cooperation for such activities seems unlikely.

25X1 [] Regional organizations sponsored by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization play a major role in the monitoring and control of locusts, but they would have difficulties battling a major upsurge. The threat of a locust plague would probably also result, as it has in the past, in a request for US assistance. []

BRIEFS

USSR - West Germany

25X1 [] Soviet President Brezhnev's visit to West Germany scheduled for 4-6 May, announced yesterday, has been nearly three years in the making. Health problems had prevented Brezhnev from going as early as February.

25X1 [] Accords between the USSR and West Germany on such subjects as scientific cooperation, cultural exchange, and legal representation have long been stalled by disagreement over clauses outlining their applicability to West Berlin. The visit by Brezhnev will be aimed at bolstering West German interest in improving relations with the USSR. []

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